



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For Release: Jan. 22, 2002

Contact: Sherry Llewellyn
Cpl. Lisa Myers
(410) 313-2236

Police Searching for Missing Mentally Challenged Woman

34-Year-Old Disappeared Last Night; Needs Medication

Howard County Police are asking for the public's help in the search for a missing 34-year-old Columbia woman who has schizophrenia, mild mental retardation and asthma. Melanie McKinney, who has not taken her required medication since yesterday afternoon, was last seen around 7:20 last night taking a garbage bag to the curb of her group home in the 5400 block of El Camino Dr.

Police are very concerned about McKinney's welfare due to her medical status and last night's extreme weather conditions. Investigators have found no indications of foul play and believe McKinney wandered away from the home and became disoriented. Police officers and members of the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue searched for McKinney throughout the night, utilizing a helicopter search team and K-9 units.

McKinney is described as a white female, 5'4", 146 lbs., with brown hair and hazel eyes. She was last seen wearing a blue parka with fur trim, red sweat pants and red sneakers.

Police are asking anyone who sees McKinney or has information about her whereabouts to contact the police department at (410) 313-2200.

###

Editor's Note: A photograph of McKinney has been sent via email to media outlets throughout the region.

